

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 01384 132138Z

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6851

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 1384

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, MASS, HA

SUBJ: SECRETARY FOURCAND'S COMMENTS ON MILITARY/CABINET

REF: (A) P-AU-P 1380; (B) P-AU-P 1375; (C) P-AU-P 1371

1. SECSTATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY SERGE GOURCAND TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 11 (SAME NIGHT EXTENSIVE CHANGES IN HAITIAN MILITARY WERE ANNOUNCED ON RADIO) THAT KEY CHANGES WERE OUSTER OF FORMER ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GEN. CLAUDE RAYMOND AND PORT-AU-PRINCE POLICE CHIEF FRANCK ROMAIN. FOURCAND, OBVIOUSLY DELIGHTED WITH CHANGES, SAID IMMEDIATE CAUSE WAS SECRET INVESTIGATION NEW CHIEF OF STAFF GEN. HILAIRE HAD BEEN PURSUING FOR PAST SEVERAL MONTHS AT DIRECTION OF PRESIDENT INTO SMUGGLING AND CORRUPTION IN LOCAL CUSTOMS. ACCORDING FOURCAND, HILAIRE'S INVESTIGATION UNCOVERED MASSIVE SMUGGLING OPERATION RUN AND PROTECTED BY FORMER ASSOCIATES OF LUCKNER CAMBRONNE, NOTABLY GEN. RAYMOND AND COL. ROMAIN, WHICH HAD COST GOH MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN LOST REVENUES. FOURCAND SPOKE VERY HIGHLY OF GEN. HILAIRE AND NEW PORT-AU-PRINCE POLICE CHIEF COL. DESLANDES DUPERVAL, BOTH OF WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS INTELLIGENT, SERIOUS, AND HONEST.

2. IN GENERAL FOURCAND CHARACTERIZED CABINET AND MILITARY SHAKEUP AS THE MOST SUBSTANTIAL AND MEANINGFUL PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE GOH IN MANY YEARS AND A BREAKTHROUGH TO "MAJOR REFORM" DESIGNED TO CLEANSE GOH OF CORRUPTION WHICH HAS CRIPPLED ITS
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PAGE 02 PORT A 01384 132138Z

PERFORMANCE. FOURCAND SAID CHANGES ALSO SIGNALLED PRESIDENT

DUVALIER'S INTENTION TO MAKE FRESH START AND CONDUCT BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT ON NEW BASIS. FOURCAND SAID THAT CABINET AND MILITARY CHANGES WERE UNRELATED TO FIRE IN NATIONAL PALACE AMMUNITION DEPOT JULY 23, EXCEPT THAT FIRE HAD INCREASED PRESIDENT'S DETERMINATION TO PRESS AHEAD WITH CHANGES HE HAD IN MIND FOR SOME TIME IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE REGIME'S AUTHORITY AND HIS COMMAND OF EVENTS. FOURCAND ALSO SAID FURTHER DISMISSALS OF CORRUPT OFFICIALS WOULD FOLLOW IN COMING WEEKS, INCLUDING A PURGE OF CUSTOMS, BUT CHANGES WOULD BE OF LESSER MAGNITUDE THAN THOSE WHICH HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE.

3. IN BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE AUGUST 11 NEW INTERIOR SECRETARY PAUL BLANCHET, OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH CHANGES IN THE MILITARY, SAID GOH WOULD NOW HAVE TO "GET MOVING" ON ITS PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY'S EVALUATION OF MILITARY SHAKEUP FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
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